782 /91/ Actually the altars from the region of Ségou originate mostly
778 in Toko, a settlement situated to the south of the town where the king's
326 blacksmiths lived. The ancestor of these blacksmiths is buried in the rocks which border Toko and from which the stones used as altar are

Fig. 5. —Stone altar, fara ba, of Banankoroni, consecrated to ancestors. It is stuck into the ground above the skull and bones of an albino, hoes, and a circumcision knife. The ritual drawing traced during the ceremonies of the renewal of the year represents the torches and the whips of the Kworè, 3 men and 4 women, which recall the number 7, image of the creation (Informant's drawing).

carved. If a village chief wants to obtain one he sends a delegate to Toko. This emissary receives from the blacksmith the stone appropriate to the function of the altar and the quality of the person

194 The ancestors are worshipped in various places: at the doors and
769 thresholds of houses, at the cemetery, and at stone altars placed at
778 the intersections of lanes and in public squares. These positive cults, which are aimed at the acquisition of beneficial forces, have as a counterpart, cults in which the villagers rid themselves of all their unlucky and infectious elements; these take place, in particular, at the corssroads, dangu, which are placed under the guardianship of the earth Soba spirits.

It would be impossible to treat all of the cults of the Bambara villages. Among these, three have caught our attention; they concern the dasiri, the dangu, and the ancestral altar stones.

A. The dasiri

194 The word dasiri (literally, which binds the mouth) designates the
776 invisible spirit, Faro's representative entrusted with watching over
778 /138/ the village, as well as the seat of this spirit and, sometimes too, the animal which accompanies it or symbolizes it.

The spirit haunts a rock, a thicket, or a tree situated near the village; the approaches to this spot are reserved for the elder in charge of the ritual (1).

[824] 1. In Massala and Soroba it is a baobab tree; in Sama, a tamarind tree, etc. See the observations on the dasiri collected by Ch. Monteil, Monographie de Djenné /Monograph of Djenne/, pp. 137-138; L. Tauxier. La Religion Bambara, pp. 195-208.

[187 Generally the place is pointed out by the geomancer at the time
361] the village is founded, or else determined by an event which occurred at that time. It is after this operation that the buildings are erected to the west of the chosen spot.

If the dasiri is a tree, no one may burn or cut its branches. In
[822] many cases it cannot be approached by anyone dressed in black or indigo, colors which represent obscurity. No Peul may sit in its
[563] shade (2). Any infraction of these taboos brings about the death of

2. The reasons for the taboo concerning the Peul have not yet been ascertained.

764 inserts them into the deceased's throat; he fills his own mouth with food previously brought forth by a woman and blows until the stomach of the deceased is filled. The rest of the food is placed near the dead man who is lowered into the grave by his sons and daughters. He is laid down on his right side, facing east, in the hole, sele dɛ̃, dug at the bottom of the grave. The two stalks of millet are placed next to him; they are more powerful than the forces of decay and destruction, and affirm the immortality of the ancestors. Together with the corpse, they are the image of the first three who died and the whole expresses the hope of resurrection promised to men.

While songs burst forth in honor of the deceased, the young men cover him with fresh branches before closing the grave; above the grave the masker whistles to proclaim that hereafter it is he who will settle the problems of the dead.

[768] The objects formerly belonging to the deceased, such as bed, mat, pipe, and razor, are then put into a pile with a little bag containing his hair. Fire is set to the pile while the chief of the Komo recites the following prayer: "Let your burned possessions leave to wait /194 before you, let them leave in smoke. We are behind, we are not in front of you; ask happiness for us. Let all the dyo with the pincers and the anvil come, let peace come" (1).

1. I ka fɛ̃ maralew dyenina, n ka ta i kono i nye, m bita siši fe, an bi ko an ti nye, i ka here nyini ã nye; ka dyow ani bala ani kula, dũ ka na.

The masker dances about the hearth, whistling and throwing up dust. The children of the deceased who are impregnated with his nyama leap three times over the flame; the force, absorbed by the smoke, is dissipated with it.

The meat of the sacrificed animal is cooked, eaten by the participants, and the containers are broken.

769 Three days after the death, the family goes down to the river bank and throws in the clothing of the deceased as well as a plate of food; both will serve to clothe and feed the double. They then recite the following prayer:

"My father Faro, a person of my family has died, here is his offering of the three days; make him return again in a woman's womb" (2).

769

2. M fa faro n so ma bana a dyanza ye kle saba kono ye; ni ye se i ka seki, muso kono ma.

The offering of food is then renewed every three days until a birth brings about the return of the double into the world of the living.

If the dead man has no descendants, his altar remains forever in the sanctuary of the Komo near the nimara boli. Otherwise, it is returned within seven days to the eldest son or to the brother who then becomes the head of the family.

769 During the night following the seventh day, the soul returns to eat
775 and drink in the hut of the widow who lives alone. All the dishes containing water or food are therefore carefully emptied and cleaned. The same meal is offered to the deceased the night following the fortieth day after the death. The widow comes out of her house on the
[765] eighth day if she is poor and must work for a living; otherwise, on the forty-first day.

At the end of a variable period of time, the soul, the double, and the name of the deceased are received by a child who is born into the family. The exuvia, mana or folo of the soul, remains in the sanctuary of the Komo as a permanent testimony to his existence on earth. It is conserved by Faro who watches over it, and maintained by the offerings of the living who will in this way bring it to the final resurrection.

When the deceased does not belong to the Komo society, the rites are celebrated over the altars of the societies to which he belongs; his soul is likewise conserved by them. The spiritual principles /195/ of the women, grouped in institutions comparable to those of men, called muso dye, are the object of the same attentions in which is found the rhythm of four days, the female number.

766 If the deceased was too poor for all the rituals, which are always costly, to be observed, two gourds of water are prepared and placed one at the head, the other at the feet of the corpse; he is then lifted in such a way that his image is reflected in the water. This accomplished, eight cowrie shells are placed at his head and eight at his feet and the gourds are covered with a winnowing tray; the image thus conserved is supposedly reflected in the kaba mana, the fourth sky, where Faro,
776 symbolized by the cowrie shells, passes judgment on its state of purity.
787 A divining rite is then performed. If the man is pure, the villagers

attend his burial despite the fact that the rituals have not been performed. If not, he is abandoned to the care of his family.

To neglect the rituals assuring life in the beyond and the security of the living causes the shadow su dya, or the ghost su kere dye (literally, white side of the dead man), to arise and present itself under the same which the dead man had on earth, to claim his due from his descendants.

Ancestor Cult

In the entryway of some residences a supporting stake (cɛ̌ dloma), sometimes marked by seven notches, represents the founding ancestor of the family. On the anniversary of his death the stake is oiled "to refresh his soul." In addition, each year the owner of the house sacrifices to all the ancestors on the family altar, on the stake, and on the threshold of the door. In some villages the ancestors are called upon by tapping the threshold with a little wooden hammer, dyele kala ni, which represents them.

In the courtyards, pieces of wood stuck in the ground (jigi semen dloma) represent the paternal uncle, the brother of the founder, and are used as seats for the heads of families who lean against them "in order to lean well upon the traditions." Farmers, before leaving for the fields, rub their hoes on them to show them to the ancestors.

Before planting the women give the head of the family a ball of raw millet, which he lines up to represent the dead according to age and rank. Then he gives them a pinch of the seed beginning with the one representing the most recent deceased and calling successively all the dead by name. The paste and the seeds are then put in water and the mash thus obtained is poured on the /196/ doorposts to the entryway of the family house upon which the blood of a sacrificial victim also is poured. When the planting time comes, the chief who has prepared the mash made with a few grains taken from the seeds distributes this to the women, beginning with the one who represents the oldest deceased. He asks the ancestors to watch over, during the germination period, the soul of the millet which will descend into the seed with the first rainfall. When the millet has reached maturity, the first seeds harvested are placed in a pot on the threshing floor where the grain will be threshed later, and are distributed to the women in the same manner as the time of planting, the oldest of the deceased having to receive the first of the seed.

769 At an annual ceremony presided over by the Komo, the members assemble in honor of thedead. It is called su si sibiri, "Saturday of the sacrifice to the dead" and is celebrated on a Saturday at the time when the ears are being formed in the millet fields.

The kotigi removes the ancestral tools from their shelter and carries them to the graves. Then the chief of the Komo and his assistants, accompanied by the maskers, carry the altars to the cemetery while singing. Each grave is put for a moment into contact with the nimara boli and the nyama boli; the exuviae of the souls of the dead each visit the bodies they once animated. To the rhythm su bara, "rhythm of the dead," played on the drums, the maskers dance and sing around the graves while mock labor is carried out with each of the ancestral tools. During the whole ceremony the kinsmen wail, the men near the graves and the women in the house. A victim is sacrificed, cut up, and cooked in new pots which are broken after they have been used in order to avoid the contagion of the nyama of the dead. The dances of the maskers are performed during the two days that follow. In some villages the ceremony is repeated after the harvest has been threshed.

Exceptional Cases

The Stillborn

845 783 It is said of a stillborn child that he has lost both his soul and his double, that is to say, his complete being. The parents who are responsible to Faro for this disaster are obliged to find and recapture the spiritual elements of their child, the woman the soul, and the man the double, in the course of long and sometimes painful rituals.

As soon as the woman is able to go out after the birth, both parents are led, shaved and naked, before the members of the family assembled in the courtyard. As testimony /197/ of the deceased to Faro, their hair, mixed with that of the child, is buried in the wall of their home. Then a tomato, representing the foetus, is introduced into a large incision made in the woman's thigh. The man crouches and drinks the juice which drips from the fruit and which symbolizes the double. Each one bows before the elders of the family, holding their hands behind their backs, to apologize for the fault committed, saying: "Here is my humiliated (sex) behind me" (1).

766 After the burial,[1] a drawing is made on the sanctuary with millet
532 mash made of grain from Faro's field; this drawing represents the dead man and the mutilations inflicted upon him. The seven attending elders close their eyes as a sign of respect in order not to "register a drawing made for Faro." In fact, its aim is to obtain the spirit's pity and to ask him to include the dead among the count he keeps of his
[769] subjects. It is also in front of this drawing that the family will come to make an offering and mourn every week.

II. Rituals of the Refuse

364 The debris, sweepings, and refuse collected in the homes, court-
778 yards, public squares, and crossroads all contain forces which men have communicated to them.

The rituals, of which these are the objects and which vary according to their origin, have as their aim the offering of these forces to Faro who returns them to men purified and regenerated in the form of rainwater with which he irrigates the fields and in the form of ponds and wells. They are thus redistributed and used again for the benefit of the community.

The refuse at the crossroads, called dangu kalaw, stalks or straw of the dangu, contains the force, nyama, of all the beings that have trampled it.

/202/ The refuse from the homes contains the wanzo of the uncircumcised, the nyama which the inhabitants have to bear for having killed animals or insects and for having received insults, and their good or bad tere. These forces, called wanzo dla (literally, to arrange the wanzo) (1) or nyama dla, constantly come to the aid of all the

1. This term is applied to them particularly in houses where there are many children.

members of the family; they improve the wanzo of the uncircumcised, facilitate the women's childbirth, and renew the vigor of the old men. A small altar, konye, kept in the room reserved for the head of the family, is dedicated to them.

After the coming out of the Komo, the sweepings gathered on the spot where the dances take place contain the forces of the members.

1 [Of a drowned person — Analyst]

562 This suspicion readily degenerates into disrespect, scorn and
778 hatred when a woman [123] is weak -- this being the usual state of affairs. On the contrary, the feeling changes to superstitious fear if she resorts to occult practices and shows herself
[754] an adept at sorcery. Many old women are held to be very expert at such practices.

In the same connection, it should be noted that a new-
851 born child is also subject to scrutiny. For seven days after birth it is not officially taken into the family, because it is thought that during this period the infant may undergo metamorphosis unless closely watched over by its mother.

We shall see, through a study of their institutions, how the Bambara conceive of life and organize it.

Funeral practices will show us how the Bambara regard the idea of death.

And after death?

775 The Romans distinguished among spirits: the manes or
769 good gods (dü[1] manes) and the lemurs or evil spirits, both of whom take an interest in the family.

The Bambara have analogous concepts.

Once it has left the body, the soul of a patriarch goes to join the souls of his ancestors, where it finds a spiritual family which protects the earthly family.

The manes (fa su-u) always like to frequent the places where their bodies lived, and that is why one keeps the things that belong to the deceased, why he is buried near his house or sometimes even under the floor, and why some families piously keep the skull of the departed to do it honor.

The entrance-hut (blon') is usually the site of the altar of
[778] the ancestors and of the family gods. The ancestral altar may be a small board with a human mask, called kara, or a mound of earth shaped vaguely like a human being. The manes are thought to enter into these objects to receive the offerings and sacrifices made to them.

It is sometimes thought that the world of the manes may be without light and heat but that otherwise they each continue the existence it had in life with the same passions, the same

1 [dei ? —Analyst]

775 passions, the same preferences and the same [124] animosities.
769 The weak lead a passive existence in poverty and oblivion, whereas the powerful -- chiefs, heads of families, diviners -- are, on the contrary, active, intriguing and passionately devoted to the interests of their earthly families. They live among their fellow beings, who are incorporeal like themselves, just as their relatives live on earth. However, they all have powers superior to those of earthly men over winds and rain, farming and hunting, in short, over all things that constitute the visible world of man. All can manifest themselves to the living, and they like to choose a place where their presence and their action will be most useful and where they prefer to receive offerings, as in a grove, on a hill, or near a spring or a tomb.

Certain manes are thought to attain an increasingly eminent position in the invisible world through special activity, until they become pure spirits.

Woe unto him who fails to maintain cordial relations with his manes! Woe unto him who neglects the dead! The dead suffer from such negligence, become angry and seek vengeance. Hence the terrifying appearance of ghosts who come to bewitch the impious; hence the possession that disturbs a person's faculties to such a degree that it makes him dangerous to others and only exorcisers could restore them to their normal state.

Here occur the analogies with the lemures, for abandoned manes are easily captured through the sorcerers' artifices and then must do the latter's bidding. Further, all those who were cast off by society during their lifetime because of harmful activities, like those of sorcerers or criminals, the accursed also have their thurifers, whom they help with their supernatural powers.

775 Does this survival of the good and the evil have any purpose or any duration and, if so, what are they? Do people believe in immortality or eternity? Obviously the Bambara do not ask such questions and native practices do not seem to provide any answers. The one definite belief is in a survival which the Bambara can only conceive of in terms of ordinary life; the terms used to describe the other world bear this out: the dead eat,

601 the household, they are ba-u (mothers), and the title ba is commonly used out of deference or respect. Very old women are addressed as mama, "grandmother" or "ancestress." [163]

564 Members of castes. These are free men who are destitute and form a kind of clientage of important families. We shall discuss them later on.

567 Slaves. Only slaves entrusted with special duties lived in the house. When a master discerned qualities in a new slave that might make him useful in the house, he kept him in his own service and often treated him well and generously. Custom gave the children of such a slave a privileged position; since they were "born in the house" (wolo-so-u, they could not be sold except in the case of extreme necessity. All confidential servants were recruited from the wolo-so-u, and the eldest, most experienced, and most favored often acquired great influence in family affairs. They knew more about the secrets and resources of the community than most of its members.

Another category of slaves is made up of those who after three generations were ipso facto freed (dyongoron'-u). They have played an important role in native society.

2. The Patriarchal Community or Patriarchy

769 The ancestral spirit-god. In order to view a custom from its most expressive aspect, it is necessary to observe it in its fullest development and, at the same time, to note anything adventitious or foreign that modifies its appearance and procedure or alters its basis.

The cult of the ancestors is the very essence of the family, and the most characteristic manifestation of this cult is the funeral ceremonies for the head of a family, the patriarch (fa). Here, one is present at the transformation of a man into an ancestral spirit-god within the span of 40 days.

This period is an interval during which a link between the past and the future is formed in the present, whereby

769 continuity is established between the living and the dead, with the deceased acting as intermediary. Religious customs, magic, and civil law, all are intermingled in apparent disorder, and the casual or inexperienced observer is all the more confused inasmuch as diverse accessory or circumstantial features mask the essentials in being more obvious. [164]

Does not the same sort of confusion confront a foreigner in France who sees the funeral of a prominent citizen? If he is uninformed, how is he to recognize the religious rites and civil requirements which form the common basis of all funeral ceremonies, for the great and for the humble, brought to their highest development for the one, reduced to their absolute minimum for the other.

764 Therefore, the important thing to show here is the substratum on which all funeral observances rest. For the sake of clarity, we shall divide the period of 40 days into four phases: (a) from death to burial; (b) burial; (c) the funeral celebration; (d) the period of mourning.

763 (a) From death to burial. As soon as death occurs, the fact is announced to everyone by appropriate means.

The lamentations of the women burst forth, and this spreads the news in the immediate vicinity, while gunshots inform the whole settlement. These acts have something of the ritual that was carried out when a Bambara died in war. Raffenel has given us a remarkable picture of it.

763 "When a Bambara died in battle, three gunshots, fired
152 near the door of his hut by one of his companions-at-arms, announced his death to the family. Wailings answered this announcement, and the weeping women of the village came out of all the huts to run to the house from where the signal had been heard. Everything was abandoned in order to share in this sorrow. First they wept, and then they ran to find out where the mourning was...

763 "The warrior charged with this mission arrived at the door at a gallop. He pulled up his horse, slowly loaded his gun, shot it, reloaded it again, then again... , and when the third shot had rung out, he rode off with equal speed, without uttering a word, without giving a single detail... Two shots announced enslavement."

764 574 Theoretically, all of this is supposed to be used to honor the dead, which is done in several ways. In the first place, it is obligatory to serve food and particularly drink to anyone who comes to present condolences. These meals and drinking bouts are a kind of communion since from everything consumed an offering is first made to the deceased and also [769] to the ancestors whom he has gone to join; it is a kind of communion with the departed members of the family.

These repasts and drinking bouts tend to develop into orgies, and the inexperienced or casual observer may think that they are carousals at the expense of the deceased. As a matter of fact, however, far from suffering a loss, the family of important persons receives more than it spends, at least for the time being (2). The more lavish the celebration, the more it is supposed to please the deceased and cause him to look favorably on his survivors.

2. The family will have to behave reciprocally toward the families who have thus shown their respect when deaths later occur among them.

764 735 In principle, everything not consumed is supposed to be given away as alms to the poor and not added to the family property. It is quite natural, therefore, that the poor of the village come to partake of the feast, and indeed, they are invited. They must be treated with much cordiality if the sentiment governing the feast conforms to the spirit of the custom. That is why the [171] chronicle tells of Nyana-n-koro, upon the death of Ngolo, claiming that the cowries given should be distributed to the poor, to travelers, and to all the needy; that is the true spirit of the custom, and that type of alms is particularly pleasing to the dead.

The funeral feasting continues for seven days, which are called dyansa, "alms." It is a time especially devoted to [537] condolences, called sanga-fo (1) "funerary discourse." The

1. Literally, "sayings (for the sake) of the dead."

596 honored by the new fa, and there is nothing to prevent him
614 from adding to the treasure.

769 The basic cult of the family is the cult of the ancestors. Although the dead are frequently buried outside the family residence, their souls are thought to live in the blon' of the dwelling. The blon' is a hut with two openings on opposite sides, one [343 592] to the street and the other to the interior, usually the courtyard. It is impossible to enter or leave a house without going through the blon', where there is always a guard, at least in 778 important houses. The ancestors are usually represented in the 769 blon' by a group of crude, conical clay figures of a man and woman, the latter identifiable by the exaggerated breasts. Sometimes the symbol of the dead is a small board about a meter long, twenty centimeters wide, and a little more than a centimeter thick; at one of its extremities a slight protuberance vaguely suggests a head, a kind of ellipsoidal cylinder with eyes, nose, mouth, and chin faintly carved on one side. On the side with the face, the board has a checkerboard pattern, often of alternating black and red squares, probably to indicate the material of a loincloth. The lower extremity of the figure has a semicircular portion cut away to give the effect of legs spread apart when the effigy is set up.

769 Whatever form it may have, the representation of the dead is called kara (1) and serves in some manner as an altar
782
778

1. In Soninké, kara means "to die" and "death."

on which libations are poured and to which are attached the remains of the sacrifices made to the dead (su-u). Nevertheless, it is also a very widespread practice to make libations and sacrifices before the door of the blon' and, more rarely, before the door of an inner hut. In this case the liquid is poured and [775] the remains smeared on the vertical edge of the opening. This practice is based on the belief that the souls of the dead ancestors like to return to the place where the fa liked to sit during his lifetime. Undoubtedly, the ancestors are regarded as guardians of the threshold; they are [181] honored as such because it is believed that they prefer to be honored in this way.

769 This is the place where on important occasions the fa
778 receives congratulations or condolences, which are addressed
782 not only to him but also to the ancestors who, though invisible, are nevertheless present.

When the fa wishes to make an offering to the ances-
769 tors (fa su son'), he squats before the door of the blon' with his
782 head bare and a chicken in his hand. He addresses the most recently deceased (1), saying: "I offer this chicken in my own

1. It seems that the ancestors form a kind of chain in which the first invisible link is the ancestor most recently deceased and the first visible link is the current fa.

name and in that of my children. Jointly with our dead fathers and mothers, preserve us from sorcerers who eat souls (suba) and from the evil of the wicked; protect us from sickness and disaster; guard our health; give us good wives and healthy children; bring success to our work in the fields, and give us rain."

If the offering is being made for a particular purpose, the fa is explicit about it and speaks just as he would to a living person. He concludes by asking that the victim reveal the response by the way it falls as it dies. Then he cuts the chicken's throat and dribbles the blood on the wall at either side of the door of the blon'. He than resumes his crouched position, and after throwing the fowl a short distance, he watches its convul-
787 sions and waits for it to fall motionless. Usually the position is regarded as favorable if the animal dies with its legs in the air and its feet turned toward the officiator; if the feet are turned away, the response is unfavorable. Often, just as he completes the offering, the fa announces what position he considers favorable or unfavorable.

The fa gives the sacrificed chicken to his wife to be cooked, and then he divides it among the members of the family; this is truly a communion.

769 As a substitute for the chicken, it is very common to
782 offer some dege, a bit of millet coarsely ground and thrown in a little water. The fa keeps this liquid in a small gourd. It is perhaps [182] reasonable to think that this is the most ancient manner of honoring the dead and, in particular, calling for their protection in obtaining the two essentials of life: grain and water.

[273] An equally common libation is made with dlo, a kind of millet beer which every Bambara enjoys drinking to the point of intoxication. The dead could hardly fail to be pleased with an offering of what they had enjoyed so much on earth!

[276] One must conclude, too, that offerings of kola nuts please the dead because it gives them a chance to enjoy a favorite treat. The officiator chews the kola nut and then spits out his saliva mixed with the juice and remains along the walls of the blon'.

[781] Such are the ordinary offerings, but on special occasions the quantity and importance of the gifts are increased according to the desired results. When many people are present and the house is prosperous, the victims are oxen and sheep. It should not be forgotten that the flesh of these consecrated victims, eaten in common, makes a very strong mystical bond between the participants; it is a true communion. It is generally conceded that the bond created by drinking consecrated liquids together is much less strong.

776 In addition to his ancestors, every Bambara has as his
778 special protector, one of those gods (nyana) which are created wholly by the work of the magician. Every family has one or more nyana, whose priest is the fa. The boli, the symbol and altar of this type of divinity, is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put into a leather or canvas sack, a gourd, or a pot. The nyana of Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, was a n-ko whose boli was kept in a monkey skin. The boli is taken out of its cover so that libations can be poured over it and animal remains smeared on it. If there is some objection to exposing it, the offering is put on the cover.

769 Everything that takes place relative to the cult of the
794 nyana is analogous to that described for the cult of the ancestors.

769 It has the same base: request, offering, communion. In addition, there is a liturgy appropriate to each nyana, in particular, the mysterious sayings that attract the god and make him [183] the actual servitor of the person uttering these sayings, rather than a benevolent protector. This shows the antithesis as to final ends between religion and magic, as was set forth in Chapter 2 of the present work.

596 614 778 The fa also has the responsibility of maintaining the efficacy of magic weapons; he must fulfill all the obligations required by each of them. Among them there are true nyana, sometimes independent, sometimes a part of the great nyana. Mostly they are amulets or talismans whose virtue depends on certain rites or simply on the observance of certain interdicts.

596 614 778 Finally, the fa is the guardian of custom and family relics, which likewise have a religious basis since custom, after all, is the continuing will of the generations, the imperious mandate of the ancestors, the table of law of the manes. Any transgression of custom is certain to bring the worst disasters. The relics are ordinary or ceremonial objects left by the successive fa. Some of them are so strongly associated with the patriarchal office that on special occasions or in certain circumstances the fa is forced by custom to wear these objects impregnated with the virtue of the ancestors. The cap and weapons of Biton at Ségou were of this nature, and such is the case among the Massa-si.

596 614 Relations between members of the community. Theoretically, the powers of the fa over the members of the community are absolute. He can hire them out, offer them as security, sell them, and even put them to death (1). He also

1. Note how Ma-n-son got rid of some of his brothers.

has the right to use whatever belongs to them,(2) both persons

2. Ngolo sacrificed his son's son.

782 genie. The same is done with libations of dlo or the juice of
796 kola nuts. Since anything offered to the genie is supposed to be
[784] consumed on the spot, an orgy lasting for several days usually follows.

782 In addition to these two great obligatory ceremonies especially concerned with the exploitation of the land, the god's protection is sought by similar, but much simplified means in all affairs whether they concern the entire settlement (wars, disasters), a particular patriarchal or familial community, or even a single individual. Through the high priest as intermediary, the offering and the request are made for the purpose indicated by the petitioner, who often promises to make a further gift to the genie when his wish has been granted. Vows of this type are made very frequently.

794 The cult of his high [230] priests and of all the im-
769 portant men of the settlement is tied in with the cult of the genie, obviously a consequence of the fact that the genie is the spiritual patron of the community which honors him; its members are his children and with him form what amounts to a family. So, in line with what happens in a patriarchal or familial community, the territorial community also holds an annual festival for the dead, during which special honor is paid to noted personages, among whom deceased high priests have first place.

311 Exploitation of the land. The high priest in charge of
621 the cult likewise regulates everything concerning the exploita-
423 tion of the terrestrial domain of the genie, and in this capacity
793 he is known as the dugu-tigi (1), master of the earth. In this

1. In line with common practice, I shall henceforth use this title to designate both capacities, the high priest and the master of the earth.

office he has the help of the council of fa, and in important matters he must follow their advice.

With the help of this council, he allots the land when

794 clergy. On the other hand, an innocent man will be over-
696 whelmed by mental and physical torture if he is unable to give his executioners what they demand.

681 Corporal punishment includes flogging, chains, starvation, torture, and death by all imaginable methods. Pecuniary punishment includes fines, confiscation, and pillage. The condemned man is also sometimes forced to labor for the clergy or is even enslaved by them.

Social and Political Role of the Brotherhoods

794 By its actions, the brotherhood, an artificial family,
776 tends to take the place of the natural family whose organization
769 it has borrowed and whose cult it has banished. It is easy to account for this.

The cult of the manes is the framework of the family and of the communities derived from it. The brotherhood has cleverly managed to set up such a cult by specially honoring the manes of its high priests, its famous members, and its eminent worshipers. [267]

Gradually, the nyana dugu-da-siri, protector of the territorial community, has given way to the nyana of the boli, a more powerful god since his territory is unlimited.

It is true that in spite of everything the tradition remains, and even though they are largely over-shadowed by the nyana of the boli, the manes of the ancestors and the nyana dugu-da-siri are still venerated. Though sowing and harvesting are celebrated
[731] with great pomp by the brotherhoods, still, when a disaster,
[782] epidemic, or terrible drought occurs, sacrifices are promptly offered to the manes and the gods of the place. People may fear their anger, but they also have confidence in their good will, and it is felt that their severity can always be tempered. On the other hand, the nyana of the boli are supposed to be basically evil, and their worship seems intended to ward off their malignity rather than to obtain their favor.

794 This duality in religion brings about extremely compli-
621 cated interrelationships which bind the communities and

614 794 761 own action, as a possible daily eventuality which should cause no surprise.

The practice of this implacable ferocity must also be considered the natural source of that kind of burning faith, as intransigent as it is horrible in our eyes, which is capable of nullifying all the feelings of affection that we regard as natural. When Ngolo realized that he had aroused dangerous ambitions in his son Ntyi, he decided that he could not escape the danger he himself had created except by a sacrifice in keeping with the contingency, and with his own hand and without hesitation, he sacrificed Ntyi's son, his own grandson.

Stubborn Bambara are often heard to say: "You may kill me; I will not yield." Tyitya's resistance shows that this is no idle boast; this same affair also shows the aspiration toward equality, so basic in the Bambara, which makes it impossible for him to bow before his fellows. Another example of the same quality is to be seen in the resistance of the "elders" whom Mamari, even he, could subdue only by murder.

794 614 769 To complete the description of the somewhat mystical features of the clan of "those of Ségou," let us recall that after [321] Mamari's death he was honored by a cult: on the part of his natural descendants because he had been their fa; on the part of the people of the clan because he had been fama; and finally, on the part of the faithful of the idols' cult because he had been the high priest. Under this aegis there was a fusion of sorts of all the people who recognized mutual bonds because they were all spiritual sons of Mamari. This relationship was the excuse used by the ton'-dyon' when they usurped supreme power, and the right of the leaders of the ton'-dyon' to succeed to the office of fama was in fact settled by the expedient of treating this relationship as though it were true descent. This cult took its characteristics from the cult of the idols. When Tonmassa began his duties [782] as high priest, his first act was to honor the manes of Mamari, and the offering was the same as that always made to ba Kongo-ba when a new fama was elected: a man and an ox.

614 794 Such are some of the characteristics of the faith that united the "people of Ségou" by ties which, without metaphor, can be called bloody. It is true, of course, that the clan's

766 614 White oxen are sacrificed on the tomb; their hides are used to make new drumheads for the tabala, and the meat [328] is offered to the manes of the deceased and then distributed among members of the family, allies, familiars, etc. The women wail, weep, and sing the praises of the deceased in company with the people of caste who organize everything. Outside, [786] banquets and virtual orgies, complete with noisy dances and songs, are organized in honor of the deceased.

This ceremony goes on for seven days.

614 At the close of this period, the new fama is publicly proclaimed. For this purpose, the leader of the slaves has the walled-up door of the tata reopened, and the whole company assembles in the large open area in front of the house of the fama. Those present include the newly elected fama, the members of the family of the Massa-si, allies, tributaries, heads of the ton'-dyon', and the sofa.

● [769] [782] An ox has been sacrificed and offered to the manes of the defunct. Its hide is stretched in the center of an open area surrounded by the crowd, and on it is spread out the sheepskin, adorned with precious amulets, which has long served as a rug for the fama of the Massa-si. Other precious family relics include [301] the scarlet cap adorned with amulets, twists of gold for the ears, and heavy silver bracelets.

The representative of the family of Kassi Konaré seats the newly elected fama on the sheepskin, puts the scarlet cap on his head, and adorns him with the gold earrings and silver bracelets. Then he makes a speech to the new fama, outlining the policies followed by his deceased predecessor and enumerating the desiderata of the people of the clan.

[567] At this point the leader of the slaves prostrates himself before the new fama and places himself in his hands to show that all the ton'-dyon' are loyal to him. He then presents individually the principal groups of slaves, tributaries, etc.

Another ceremony brings the new fama, prominent Massa-si, their allies, the principal leaders of the slaves, and the tributaries to the wood sacred to the protective idol of the clan, where a reciprocal oath of loyalty is taken. A ritual communion follows.

761 principles of the cadaver on altars or masks in order to preserve them
764 for the community.

The rites have undergone an evolution. Formerly the bodies
764 were hung from trees until they rotted, while the bones were kept. At present the bodies are buried. Only a band of cotton symbolizing the tongue of the deceased, that is, his word, is attached to the
[764] branch of a tree. If the deceased was an initiate of the Komo, the society plays an important role in the funeral rites.

All these rites have been studied by G. Dieterlen and Tauxier.
766 Monteil has described at great length the funeral ceremonies of a chief: the three rifle shots recalling his combats, the lamentations of the women, the notification of the village notables, the offerings of relatives and friends, the alms at the crossroads, and finally, the inhumation. The body is prepared, the head shaved, the interior cleaned with water and salt. A paste of water and ground cowry is put into the body openings (the ground cowries possess a divine spirit assuring the preservation of the cadaver). The body, and particularly the head, is daubed with this same paste, then the body is laid on its right side, feet to the north (a woman would be laid on her left side). Finally, the funeral celebration takes place, with the ritual feast
765 and the purifications. Seven days later the celebration of commemoration (Sangha) takes place, followed by the mourning of the women for forty days. After this time the deceased is transformed into a living ancestor.

763 The Bambara receive omens of their death or of a chief's death from certain signs given them in the bush, such as coming across a chameleon on a red anthill, the cry of a certain mythical hyena, the passing of certain crying monkeys or certain birds.

Certain gifted beings have the ability to perceive the departure of a person's spiritual forces and his imminent death. Sometimes they are able to bring back these forces and reinstate them in the body to save the man in danger.

[95] g. Ancestor Worship

769 After his death a man is transformed into a living ancestor
775 and is the object of a cult. The cult is closely connected to the agricultural cults; the ancestors are efficient vital forces which

769 participate in men's lives, protect them, and make their fields
775 fertile. The farming tools are presented at their altars before the tillage, and every year their souls come to animate the maskers who dance in their honor under the supervision of the Komo. After the grain is threshed, they receive the first products and are offered sacrifices.

h. Other Rites

788 Besides the rites concerning the person, the Bambara have others, such as those relating to the household wastes where the forces of men are accumulated. The purpose of these rites is to offer these forces to Faro and to regenerate and purify men. The wastes are burned periodically, the men breathe in the fumes, and the ashes are thrown in the river. Sacrifices are offered to the god, and special dances accompany the ceremony.

796 Rain rites common to all of Africa are practiced in May by the members of the Kworé society. The rites for renewing the year involve individual, familial, and collective participation. The signs of the world are traced on the walls of individual or collective sanctuaries, and by the intermediary of a sacrifice on the altars, by dances and rhythmic chants, man renews the cardinal points and the forces of the world which in turn renew his soul. (All these rites have been described by G. Dieterlen in the Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

B. Special Technique In General Usage

773 In Bambara thought, "every technique is a reparation taught man by Faro, a palliative to the cosmic disorder which is generally caused by an infraction of taboo ... Men first lived by gathering their food, then later by fishing and hunting; they used only their hands. Little by little the techniques appeared, following a chronology remembered by the Bambara of today. The first material to be used was the fiber of the nyama tree frond which were made the first fishing nets, the first sling, the first covering for the sexual parts." (1) The second material was wood from which the farming

1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

342 shovel. A coping of bricks is then laid out around the roof, leaving room for the gutters which spill into the streets. These houses may be topped with a second roof, a thatched cone. The four chief timbers are set at the four angles of the house. There is a door in the first ceiling, and precious goods or objects are kept in this part of the house. As in the round huts, the door always opens to the south.

The outside of the houses are plastered with earth mixed with [237] cow dung; on the inside, the floor and lower part of the walls are daubed with black earth mixed with fresh cow manure and bark from [824] the jumbo tree (Napoleona Heudelotii); the upper walls and the ceiling are covered with white river clay. Where the two colors meet, [531] lines of festoons traced with the finger symbolize the descent of the third Word. On the white walls are painted ladders, calabash spoons, animsla, signs conveying [102] the worldly situation of the owner as well as the soul of the artist.

[356] The periphery of the entrance door is daubed with fresh cow [769] dung every 15 days, and more liberally with rotted cow dung once a year before the rains. This custom is linked to ancestor worship.

Canari [earthenware vessels] containing certain plants are 353 buried under the bed of the head of the family; other plants and 352 juice from roots are hidden under the women's beds. The boli are hooked to the roofing of the houses for they must touch neither earth, water, nor fire. Nets, diakumadjulu, are hung from the ceiling; they hold clothes or calabashes for the food; mats or animal skins are spread on the ground; beds, different-sized calabashes, and stools complete the furnishings. The different huts belonging to one family 351 are surrounded by a wall that opens into the vestibule of a hut with 342 two doors, oriented north-south. This is where the head of the family receives strangers. In the inside court are found hearths made [364] of three stones, mortars for millet, and chicken coops, a sort of small square hut made of clay mixed with straw. The granaries, 343 constructed on piles, have the form of round huts. They are divided 251 into four parts, where the four principal grains are kept: millet, rice, fonio, ground nuts. Some grains may be kept together in the same compartment, for example, millet and ground nuts. Certain granaries, bonio, are veritable cigar-shaped pots made by the blacksmiths' wives. When the bonio is finished, it is cut into sections

764 left of each chamber's entrance and was left to go out by itself. The body was placed in the middle of the chamber, the feet to the north and the head to the south. At the time of a new burial, all the long bones were gathered in one corner of the chamber and all the skulls in another, for the number of deceased was verified by these. Finally in the Kokum region hundreds of tumuli cover vaults consisting of a [346] heart-shaped chamber cut in the laterite and preceded by a vestibule to the west and by steps cut into the rock which lead to the open air. The outside and inside doors are closed by a slab of laterite. The outside door is hidden under the tumulus, with three equally-spaced stones marking the location. The skulls are arranged in a dome and separated from the long bones. Lastly, the tomb of the village's founding ancestor is found in the center of the village, to the north of the old fortified court of the chiefs' house.

III. Art

517 The Bambara conception of art is very different from the occidental idea of art for art's sake. Every object that we find beautiful has a precise social, religious, or technical significance for the Bambara: "The art of the Blacks is purposeful ... it is gratuitous projection in a material of ideas and knowledge which bring the user or spectator nothing other than themselves. Doubtless crude in the first stages, often the product of superficial knowledge or even of calculated errors, the esthetic sense of the Blacks is clarified and affirmed as they learn and as they pass from a 'light knowledge' to a knowledge of the great secrets. It seems impossible to an educated man that he could make an abstraction of his knowledge to judge a dance or to become enthusiastic over the playing of a clever harpist. What we call beauty is for the Black the adequacy of the object to represent that for which it is created." (1)

1. M. Griaule, "L'art nègre" [Negro Art], Présence africaine.

532 The masks conceal the person and transform the human being into a supernatural being. They are the privileged instrument of the [X9] nyama, the first [104] model having been carved to fix the vital force of the first dead ancestor in a wooden figure. "The society of

3. The Reincarnation of Souls

775 769 It is a great surprise that the Bambara believe in the reincarnation of souls. Some do not dare to believe in it because they sacrifice to the shades of their ancestors, and others, "cultivated minds, nourished by the sanest philosophy," reject this belief as illogical, since the religion of the Negro is the worship of the dead! They do, in fact, worship the dead, but in the Bambara religion this worship, extensive as it is, remains a detail, and not the foundation. To honor the shades of his ancestors (but only of those who were heads of families, so that the worship of the dead is already somewhat limited -- with all due respect to those who see nothing but it), the Bambara family head throws a big blot of chicken blood and a mouthful of chewed kola nut onto the dégé, or millet flour mixed with water, and pours it onto the wall at the entrance of his hut. He does so to implore the help and protection of that power or authority which his predecessors possessed in their position as family head, an authority exactly the same as that which he himself possesses. He believes, nonetheless, in the reincarnation of souls! This belief is general and universal among fetishists, and if some do not dare admit it before Europeans and [576] Moslems, their reticence is due to simple human respect, to a fear of contradicting beliefs which they know to be contrary to their own, a wish not to offend anyone and not to be the butt of laughter and ridicule.

766 775 Infants who die at the breast before having achieved the use of reason are buried in a corner of the inner courtyard and sometimes even in the hut where they were born. Before such a child is buried, one of its limbs, usually the big toe of the right foot, is broken, and sometimes the father marks it with a knife on /57/ the shoulder, the arm, or the chest. He thinks that the child who will come after it will be animated by the soul of the dead one, and he neglects nothing that might possibly enable him to ascertain whether it is. This stupid and ridiculous operation is commonly performed under the eyes of the mother, and some strange events occur. Since she must submit 775 to the will of her husband as soon as possible and have marital relations 826 with him, she soon conceives. During her pregnancy her imagination

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4. I dangha sagi, "may you be blessed on your arrival, on your return into our midst." -- (Your return to us is a blessing.) -- The Negroes abbreviate, saying, i dana sagi; it is only old men and those who pride themselves on speaking their language well, who articulate clearly and say i dangha sagi.

legend, this sagi whose name one avoids taking in vain, was chief of the village and influential in its environs. He died very old, took on flesh again in the womb of a woman of the family, and recommenced the cycle of his existence. He again became village chief, and again died in extreme old age, and returned to the flesh again a third time. As always he was chief, passed from life to death in extreme old age, was honored and respected by everyone, and received funeral honors such as have never been awarded to any Negro prince.

775 At the time of death the soul goes into Lahara, a vague word, so vague that a Bambara cannot define it or give you any idea of it. It is the place where the invisible beings live and where everything becomes invisible. Children and those who have not completely fulfilled the cycle of their existence, only pass through and hasten to return to the wombs of their mothers, or at least to those of women of their families.

775 A secret force urges old men to return to the flesh again in
●769 their own family, but sometimes they refuse and seek limbs elsewhere. They spend a longer time in Lahara and, doubtless matured by experience, they are not always in a hurry to reappear. Many remain there for a number of years, awaiting a favorable moment, and this uncertainty hovering over the fate of the old men, may be a reason for sacrifices to the dead. One definite fact is that these sacrifices are directed only to the dead who have had authority in the country, the village, or the family, and the honors rendered them seem to be

775 directed more to the authority which they had in their lifetimes than
769 to the persons themselves.

775 A good number of Bambara believe in hell and assert that the souls of the wicked are condemned by God to eternal torment. It is clear that they are changed into demons and do not come back to life, but it is so difficult to deserve hell that not one Bambara goes there, and they live without any fear, just as if it did not exist. This belief in hell perhaps indicates an exception to my statement on the reincarnation of souls but does not destroy its validity, and it can be stated that the majority of Negroes believe in such a reincarnation. /61/

Chapter 4

Bambara Ideas concerning God, Invisible Beings, and Adam and Eve

1. Belief in God

776 The Bambara believe in the existence of a Supreme Being who is Creator and Master of all things; they believe in God, in a recompensing God who can punish and reward. Their most polished formulas are those in which they testify to their belief in Him, and His name is on their lips at every moment without any special reason.

776 To a young married couple, a Bambara hastens to say: "May
576 your union be happy, may God give you peace and many children," and when a family is in sorrow, for instance because they have lost one of the members, it is in God that they seek consolation and in invoking Him that they give comfort: "May God have pity on him and grant him a happy sojourn in Lahara," "may He not separate him from good people and may He add to your days those of which he has been deprived." (1)

776 1. These last phrases have been taken
775 by some as a reason to doubt that the

794 carry out their indecencies, shout obscenities, drink, and get drunk.
764 And for three consecutive nights after the burial the same scenes are repeated in front of the fetish tree.

794 The anniversary of the death of a koredé ("son of koré") who
● 769 became a koretigi (priest of koré), a gnéna-n-sonnaba (priest of the dasiri) or a gouatigi (head of a group, of a family), is celebrated with pomp; the family always makes it a point of honor to cook d'lo (beer), and people come from all directions to take part in the orgy. /127/

Chapter 7

The Worship of Satan or Worship of the Gnâ, or Boli

1. What is Meant by Gnâ, or Boli

776 Ever since God created their race and put it into the world, the Bambara have respected, venerated, and sacrificed to the gnéna, or djiné, those beings who are intermediate between angels and men. When one of them forgets himself under the influence of a jug of beer so far as to open to you -- oh, very slightly! -- a recess of his soul, he delights in telling you this, but he is careful not to make such a statement when he speaks to you of the gnâ, or boli. For although the beginnings of boli worship fade into the dark of the ages, it nevertheless has its history. The origin of each boli is known, and an initiate, however little instructed in its rites, can tell you whether it comes from the north or south, east or west, and whether it is male or female; and every graybeard can recite its family tree for you.

There is a great difference between the gnéna and the gnâ; they are different in every way, and we have here two beliefs which, though parallel, are absolutely distinct. Any object, whatever it may be, can become the home of a gnena, but these spirits prefer a living being, a plant, a tree, or an animal, for example, and when one is tired of its dwelling it moves elsewhere. A gnâ always lives in an

794 bedlam and racket in front of the corpse, which is displayed under the
766 great trees that shade the entrance of the village. That is a most lugubrious and macabre rite! After the burial for three successive nights, the same respects are paid to the deceased in front of the fetish tree in the koré tou (sacred grove), and if the deceased was a koré tigi (head of the sect of koré), a gnéna-n-sonnaba (head of the village and priest of the dasiri), a bolitigi (master of a boli), a fiélikéla (famous sorcerer), a gouatigi (family head), a souroukou tigi or a korodouga tigi (head of a group in the sect (1)), they often continue

1. See my chapter on the koré, or koté.

their orgies for eight days running, gorging themselves with d'lo (beer), and getting drunk.

794 The anniversaries of the old people, those who had fame,
769 authority, and especially authority in the sect, are observed regularly every year, and on that day there is a memorial to members of the family who belonged to the sect. Youths in large numbers come from all directions to abandon themselves to barbaric dances, and since beer flows in streams, the drinking bout that takes place is indescribable. /230/ Only a family reduced to the blackest poverty would neglect to offer d'lo (millet beer).

794 On the morning that follows these dances in honor of a deceased
769 koré dé, a saraka is placed with great ceremony at the dankoun ba (1)
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1. Dankoun, a corner of land formed by two paths that cross; dankoun ba, "great dankoun," the dankoun most popular in the village.

of the village. It consists of the remains of the torches of the tatougoula (2), the bent, broken, and unraveled whips of the bisatjila

2. Tatougoula, those who dance with fire.

(3), the thorn brooms of the woni sama (4), and finally the leafy branch

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3. Bisatjila, those who flagellate themselves.

4. Woni sama, those who scratch themselves with thorns.

used by the korodouga (5) to drive away the sparks crackling on the

5. Korodouga, clowns, storytellers /griots/ of the sect.

backs of the tatougoula.

7. Burial of the Excommunicated

766 Those with sores, lepers, and persons killed by a fetish who did not accept their sacrifice may be said to be excommunicated. No adult who dies without hair on his head or body has the right to the honor of a Bambara burial, and he is given that of lepers.

A leper is never buried in the common cemetery; he is sent far off into the bush to a separate place. The more usual custom, actually, is to slip the corpse into a hollow baobab (Adansonia digitata) with a small, live pullet as companion -- or an egg, if the deceased is a girl. The same fate befalls a bald person.

The reason for this custom is that this class of people have been abandoned by the Creator and the spirits, all of whom scorn them and withdraw from them. If ever the ground where ancestors rest should receive the remains of one of these accursed ones, their bones would shake with disgust. Moreover, they would take revenge for having to rest near people who during their lifetime were without hair; they would be deaf to every prayer and would refuse every sacrifice. The village and the entire region there would suffer a total lack of rain, a drought without any equal, in short, a famine with all its horrors. /231/

766 When they have sewed and tied it well, they take it on their shoulders
794 and head on the double for the exit door. There they stop and without any respect roughly set the body down. Armed with picks they make an opening in the wall of the hut and, seizing the corpse by the feet, they drag it and put it into this opening. Strong hands seize it from the outside, they pull and the others push, and the excommunicated one comes out of his dwelling and appears in the alley or on the square.
[482] Four fellows -- sons of the fetish, for they alone are present at these burials -- take him on their shoulders and, running, carry him to the cemetery. At the edge of the grave they put down their load, the initiates give a loud cry, a sort of roar, and they roll him with their feet into his final home. For such people there is not the slightest farewell or prayer, and the grave is filled at once.

In the evening the fetish is brought out, and the initiates abandon
[189] themselves to their sacred dances, while the god, in the hands of its priests, /232/ runs about the village and its environs, exorcising. All night long nothing is heard but the bellowing of horns and trumpets and sacred hymns shouted by the crowd, and from a distance one would say they were dull rumblings or the actual cries of wild animals.

8. Worship accorded to the Dead

● 769 At the death of a Bambara not the slightest sacrifice is directed either to him or to the deceased of the family. However, the worship of the dead is prevalent among the Bambara, althought it cannot be compared to the worship of the genii, especially of the boli. Nevertheless, everyday one can see, at the door of one family or another, a large splash of blood on the wall about a meter from the ground, a brownish octopus one might say, throwing its twisted arms here and there and struggling against a clump of feathers stuck on its back with the juice of a chewed kola nut. Some people have seen in this worship the basis of the Negro religion and, no doubt because they did not know the language and have been unable to give an exact meaning to the words caught by their ears, they have portrayed the Bambara with knife always in hand, ready to slaughter in honor of his relatives. Because they group together all saraka and sacrifices,

769 and do not know the ways and customs of the country, they take for sacrifices to the shades of the ancestors, the sacrifices which are made to the gnéna, or djiné, genii and to the gnâ, or boli, genii.

769 554 Thus, worship of the dead does not have all the scope that people sometimes choose to attribute to it. Moreover, the Bambara revere only those dead who had a little authority on this earth, such as the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or the dougoutigi (village heads, priests of the dasiri), the sotigi (heads of quarters), and the gouatigi (1) (heads

1. The gouatigi, head of the family, is called fa, "father." This word "father" should be taken in a broad sense, for to much of the family the gouatigi is a grandfather, a brother, or an uncle. Making a sacrifice to the fa sou (fa, "father"; sou, "corpse") does not mean sacrificing to the father who begot you, to the father of the family, to the one who bore the title of gouatigi. The chief wife of a gnéna-n-sonnaba, sotigi, and gouatigi, like her husband, receives a share of the sacrifice.

of families), and this reverence is given less to the individuals themselves than to the authority they had. /233/

769 The first sacrifice to an ancestor who was a headman is made a year after his death and at the second big festival that follows his death. In order for him to be entitled to a trickle of blood, the sangafo (1) must have been completed, and it ends at the first festival

1. Sangafo, "to offer condolences on the occasion of a death."

held at the end of the sounkalo (soun, "fast"; kalo, "month"), or Ramadan (2).

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2. The Negroes' great festival is held at the end of Ramadan. They have a second at the festival of the كَبَشْ sheep. The Moslem masters forced them to observe these two festivals, but the Bambara have not adopted a single Moslem rite. They sacrifice to the dasiri, to some djiné genii, and to the dead.

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The great sacrifice to the dead is made at the end of Ramadan and at the festival of the كَبَشْ sheep. The gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, first sacrifices to the b'lon da ba sou (3), those who,

3. Sou, "corpses"; b'lon da ba, "of the great b'lon," the great entry hut giving access to the village.

like themselves, were priests of the dasiri and, in a general way, to all those who had some civil or religious authority in the village. All the members of his council are present at this sacrifice. After the libations of millet flour mixed with water and d'lo, or millet beer, a fine white hen (4) is slaughtered, and sometimes a sheep then, two

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4. In general sacrifices where the whole population or a whole sect participates, the liturgical color is the primary consideration, and a pullet a day old has as much value as a large rooster. When a victim of the liturgical color cannot be obtained, only water, dégé, and the kola nut are offered.

white kola nuts are offered and, if the sacrifice is accepted, a clump of wool or a few feathers are torn from the victim and stuck onto the

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782 middle of the splash of blood by means of a bit of chewed kola nut. When the general sacrifice has been made, every member of the council offers his white hen and his kola nut.

When the village has paid its respects to the blonda ba sou, the sotigi (heads of quarters) gather the gouatigi (heads of families) under their jurisdiction, and all these people sacrifice as before to the shades of those who were heads of quarters (5). Each family head

> 5. Only hens are slaughtered. There are always libations of dégé (millet flour mixed with water) and of d'lo (beer), and offerings of kola nuts.

then goes back to his home, gathers his children, and sacrifices to the shades of his fathers, to those who, like him, were heads of the family. /234/

The Bambara sacrifice to their ancestors very often; they do so by order of a sorcerer and on any occasions in their lives that are at all important, such as the circumcision or excision of one of their children, a betrothal or a wedding (1), but they do so especially when

> 1. Many Bambara do not sacrifice even on these occasions (circumcision, wedding, betrothal) but prefer to call on the family boli, which they dread more. In the winter everybody sacrifices to the shades of ancestors.

winter comes and the fields are sown. The sacrifices are simple and individual, and only the people of the house are present; just a hen, with a little dégé and a kola nut, comprise the whole expense.

The formula of the sacrifice has no special characteristics. The same ideas are always repeated: "I offer this dégé, this d'lo, and this hen; it is a sacrifice that I make to you in my name and in the name of my children. Preserve us from the souba, from sorcery, and from evil-doers. Favor us, preserve us from sickness, give us wives and healthy children, cause us to have rain in the winter, health to work our fields, and a fine harvest."

4: Henry--263 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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The sacrifice to the dead is most often made on the doorsill of the entry hut, and a splash of blood is spread on the wall on each side of the door, about a meter and half from the ground. Many families also have an altar for sacrificing to the dead in their main b'lon; it is the kâra, an earthen bas-relief depicting a man and a woman. It is all crudely made and has no human qualities about it. Nevertheless, one can guess what the Negroes wanted to depict, for although the woman is without mouth, ears, nose, or eyes, just like her mate, she is always adorned with two fine breasts.